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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of teacher feedback on the oral reading performance of nine low-ability second grade readers. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three treatment sequence conditions. A single-subject format was incorporated by using a Latin Square design for presenting the three treatment conditions--graphophonemic immediate, graphophonemic delayed, and semantic delayed--to all three groups. On each of 23 days, the students read aloud a different 200-400 word passage. Dependent measures were literal comprehension and qualitative dimensions of word recognition, graphic similarity, semantic acceptability, and self-corrections. Results indicated that the treatments did not differentially affect the graphic similarity of readers' responses, although the semantic delayed condition did encourage responses that were higher in semantic acceptability. In addition, results indicated no significant differences in the percent of miscues corrected by each of the three groups. However, all three groups increased in the use of the correction process from baseline 1 to baseline 4. No systematic sequence of treatment effects was evident for either word recognition or comprehension. Finally, the semantic delayed condition influenced comprehension more positively that did the graphophonemic immediate and graphophonemic delayed conditions. (HTH)

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The Influence of Sustaining Feedback on the Oral Reading Performance of Low Ability Readers

Oral reading is a classroom activity in most primary reading programs and teacher feedback is often a part of this activity. According to Anderson and Brophy (1976), terminal and sustaining feedback are two forms of teacher feedback behavior that occur. Terminal feedback involves the teacher supplying the correct word to the reader to correct the miscue by examining such cues as initial letters, word parts or contextual meaning.

There is evidence (e.g., Hoffman & Kugle, 1981) that teachers use different feedback strategies with high ability readers than with low ability readers. Further, these various feedback strategies seem to affect the oral reading performance of these students. Of the existing studies investigating teacher feedback behaviors some have observed that low ability readers seem to receive more graphophonemic (letter sound) type feedback as compared to contextual feedback (e.g., Hoffman & Kugle, 1981). Others have found that it is more likely for teachers to interrupt poor readers who miscue when reading than good readers (e.g., Allington, 1980; Hoffman & Clements, 1981).

Another group of studies (Pehrsson, 1974; Niles, 1979) has found that type and timing affect the reading performance of students differently. For example, when comparing no-teacher feedback to sustaining graphophonic feedback, Niles, et al., (1977) reported significantly higher scores for an uninterrupted

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group of readers on their retelling (comprehension) and on miscues (word recognition) which resulted in no meaning change. On the other hand, the group receiving sustaining graphonphonic feedback produced miscues which were highly similar to the text graphically (graphic similarity).

Teacher feedback during oral reading has been shown to affect various student behaviors, such as word recognition errors or miscues (e.g., Niles, et al., 1977), self-corrections (e.g., McNaughton & Glynn, 1981) and comprehension (e.g., Pehrsson, 1974) during the reading activity. In addition, research has consistently shown that good readers receive more contextual feedback as compared to graphophonemic feedback. Poor readers are also interrupted when they miscue more often than good readers (Hoffman & Clements, 1981).

Of the existing studies none has explored the impact of various types of sustaining feedback within low ability readers; nor have studies identified the baseline data of the reader (i.e., reader's performance prior to treatment). It is given that ability is a factor in teacher feedback; but it is unclear how specific teacher behaviors that include the type and timing of teacher feedback may affect the performance of low ability readers. Therefore, it was the intention of this study to investigate the effects of sustaining feedback on the reading performance of low ability readers. Specifically, this study investigated the effects of various feedback strategies by first identifying the baseline data of the reader, and secondly, describing the change that occurred over the treatment period.

The extent and nature of the influence of teacher feedback on reading performance remains unclear. It is even less clear for low ability readers.

Data do seem to indicate that consistent teacher feedback behavior can produce predictable student reading performance in word recognition (Niles, 1979).

Proponents of teacher feedback encourage teachers to provide poor readers with semantic type feedback and delayed timing which is often used with more able readers (Allington, 1983). However, little is known about the influence of such teacher feedback on the performance of low ability readers. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of teacher feedback on the oral reading performance of low ability second grade readers. In particular, two features of feedback, type (graphophonemic and semantic) and timing (immediate and delayed) were examined.

Method

Sample

A sample of nine low ability second-grade readers were identified and randomly assigned to one of three treatment sequence conditions. A single-subject format (e.g. A B A C A D A) was incorporated by using a Latin Square design for presenting the three treatment conditions to all three groups.

Task

On each of twenty-three days the students read orally a different 200-400 word passage. The feedback the student received depended on the assignment to the specific treatment condition and the sequence in the research design.

Procedures for data collections were as follows:

1. Each of the students were asked to read a short story. The students were told that they would not be graded for their reading performance.

2. Following the oral reading activity, the students were requested to answer some questions about the passage they read. For each story eight literal questions were asked. One follow-up query was allowed per response if the appropriateness of the answer was incomplete. The researcher then prompted the student by asking "Can you tell me more?"

3. The entire session was tape recorded. Later the tapes were replayed to complete the recording of miscues on a pre-prepared worksheet. The worksheet became the basis for the miscue analysis.

Materials

The reading passages for this study were taken from basal texts of Rand McNally and Company (Fay, L., Ross, R. R., and Laray, M., 1974) and MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc. (Smith, C. B. and Wardhaugh, R., 1975) reading series. The participants had not previously read in these texts. Twenty-three narrative passages were selected and randomly assigned to each day of the treatment period. All of the students read the same passage on a given day in each of the treatment conditions.

Procedure

Three teacher feedback treatment conditions that included type and timing variables were used in this study. They include: 1) graphophonemic immediate, 2) graphophonemic delayed, and 3) semantic delayed.

Each group received graphophonemic immediate prompts (the examiner immediately calls the readers attention to the deviation by pointing to the word and prompting, "Look closely at the letters in this word."); graphophonemic

delayed (the examiner prompts as above but after the reader has completed reading the sentence); and semantic delayed prompts (the examiner prompts the reader by asking "Does that make sense?" after the reader has completed reading the sentence).

Results

Relevant descriptive and statistical results are reported for the word recognition and comprehension performance of the readers. Evaluation of all reading miscues, made by the students, were compared to the expected response according to their graphic similarity and semantic acceptability. The miscues which the students corrected themselves, i.e., self-correction, were also evaluated. Scores were assigned to miscues by applying specific scoring criteria outlined in the procedures of the Reading Strategies Profile (Hutson & Gove, 1980). Scores were obtained for self-corrections by counting the number of miscues which the students corrected themselves. Finally, scores were assigned the comprehension performance based on the readers' ability to correctly answer eight textually explicit questions about the passage they read.

An analysis of variance, appropriate post hoc procedures, and t-test were used: 1) to determine if there were group differences based on the teacher feedback conditions, 2) to determine if the readers' reacted to the type and timing of treatment differently, 3) to determine if there were significant differences among scores for the groups based on the treatment sequence, and 4) to determine if there were changes in the oral reading performance of the

students from BL_1 to BL_4.

Results indicated no significant differences in the scores obtained by each of three groups in the categories of graphic similarity and semantic acceptability. Although there were no treatment effects for graphic similarity the semantic acceptability analysis did indicate that semantic delayed always produced the highest semantic acceptability score. In addition, results indicated no significant differences in the percentages of miscue corrected by each of the three groups. However, all three groups increased in the use of the correction process from BL_1 to BL_4. No systematic sequence of treatment effects were evident for either word recognition or comprehension. Finally, the semantic delayed condition influenced comprehension more positively than did the graphophonemic immediate and graphophonemic delayed condition.

DISCUSSION

Word Recognition. The influence of type and timing on the readers' word recognition in this study provides a mixed picture. For the graphic similarity dimension of word recognition, no consistent effect was found for any treatment. While one group had a consistently higher graphic similarity score, there were no within group differences due to treatment. These results are in agreement with those of Pany, McCoy and Peters (1981) and Niles (1979) which showed little impact from sustaining feedback or graphic similarity scores of younger readers. Niles, Graham and Winstead (1977) on the other hand, had demonstrated effects with older readers (fourth graders). They found that those readers who received graphophonemic prompts yielded higher graphic similarity scores. The researchers argued that the

prompt focused the readers attention on this cue system and that the readers responses reflected these attention processes.

Readers have three major cue systems available when processing text; graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic. These cue systems are processed simultaneously if the reader is to be successful. The obejctive of sustaining feedback is to encourage the reader to use these cues. Thus, if the teacher's feedback is cognitively encouraging the reader to pay attention to a particular cue source, then this emphasis should be reflected in the quality of the response. Such was not the case with the second-grade readers in this study. The graphophonic treatments did not yield the expected higher graphic similarity scores. One possible explanation for this finding is that these readers were already devoting high levels of attention to the graphophonic cue system because of their developmental stage in reading (Biemiller, 1970, and Weber, 1970) and their present instructional program which likely emphasized decoding (Allington, 1978). This latter point also helps explain why the semantic feedback also did not significantly divert the readers' attention away from a decoding set and produce lower graphic similarity scores. These participants were still learning to decode, thus their performance and instructional program reflected their cognitive needs.

Indirectly, the results for semantic acceptability lend support for the prior explanation of a ceiling effect for graphic similarity and support the notion that sustaining teacher feedback does effect the reader's performance. In this study, the semantic delayed condition produced the highest semantic acceptability score for the readers. This finding indicates that the prompt "Does that make sense?" did encourage readers to respond accordingly; their

unexpected responses were more meaningful with respect to the author's intended meaning. The type of teacher's prompt and the time to reflect using the semantic cue system as a guide raised the probability that the readers would produce a more sensible response than if they were asked to pay more attention to graphophonic cues. These findings are in agreement with Niles (1979) and Niles, Graham and Winstead (1977) who found that fourth graders who received semantic prompts were more likely to produce higher semantic acceptability scores for their miscues. Pany, McCoy and Peters (1981) did not find semantic effects for their remedial readers. However, these remedial readers were receiving their feedback treatment as part of an instructional program that was heavily decoding oriented (Niles, 1984). While the second grade readers in this study were receiving a decoding emphasis in their instructional material they were still receiving instruction in using all three language cue systems. Also, the treatment in this study did not use the child's reading teacher as the instructor and was clearly separate from the daily instructional program.

Self-correcting behavior was not consistently related to the type and timing of the sustaining feedback. As expected the delayed feedback conditions allowed for more reader self-correction than for immediate feedback. Providing readers with more think time allows them the opportunity for using reading strategies to solve their own reading problems (Johnson and Afflerback, 1983). Immediate corrections for readers do not provide enough time to process the textual clues (Hoffman, O'Neal and Clements, 1982).

The readers in this study demonstrated that they would correct their miscues if given the opportunity by the teacher. Each group increased their

tendency to correct over the course of the study. This tendency seems to suggest that the readers learned that correction or monitoring was an important feature of their reading situation. Interestingly, the third group which had the highest scores on graphic and semantic similarity scores and comprehension reflected the greatest gain in correction percentage. They increased from 6% in baseline one to 30% in baseline four. One could argue that they were the best readers and didn't need to correct more. However, it must be underscored that these readers were among the least proficient in their class. Thus, they were the best among the worst. Perhaps the sustaining feedback provided a model for these "good" flow ability readers to improve monitoring of their own reading. The readers' comments during the treatment corroborate the view. By the end of the treatment it was not unusual to have a reader say to the examiner, "Wait, wait I can get it myself."

Comprehension. Two effects were most prominent for type and timing on comprehension. First, the semantic delayed was most influential for groups one and two. Group three had consistently high comprehension scores and did not reflect any differential treatment effects. Group three did, however, begin their treatment with the influential semantic delayed condition. Whether this was a factor in their consistently high performance cannot be determined within the scope of this study.

The positive influence of the semantic delayed prompt is in agreement with studies by Pehresson (1974) and Niles, Graham and Winstead (1977). However, these findings do not substantiate those of Niles (1979) and Pany, McCoy and Peters (1981) who did not find any effects for prompting on comprehension.

The second prominent finding that the readers tended to produce higher

comprehension scores during treatment than during baseline indicates that teacher prompting or the potential of teacher prompting may increase the information pick-up of the reader. The prompting process may act as an attention director for the reader. Thus, if the teacher prompts a reader s/he naturally focus more attention to that point in the text. If that point happens to be tested in the comprehension question the reader may benefit indirectly. This may be particularly true in the case of semantic prompts because the prompt and the testing mode are more congruent. That is, they are both semantically based and would allow for transfer appropriate processing (Bransford and Franks, 1977).

No systematic treatment effects were evident for either word recognition or comprehension measures. The point mentioned above that comprehension was greater in all semantic delayed as well as graphophonic immediate treatment conditions does observe further elaboration. A case has been made in the past (e.g. Niles, Graham and Winstead, 1977) that prompting, especially immediate graphophonic, can be interference for a reader's comprehension. It was not in this study. However, the readers in this study were second graders who are used to such a strategy in their daily instruction (Hoffman, 1983). Therefore, they may not be as bothered by this strategy as more mature readers who receive different instructional strategies and have a meaning centered set for reading.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SUSTAINING FEEDBACK ON THE ORAL READING PERFORMANCE OF LOW ABILITY READERS

by

Treana Adkins

(ABSTRACT)

The effects of teacher feedback on the reader's performance during oral reading have not been clearly delineated. This study was designed to investigate how two features of sustaining teacher feedback, type (graphophonemic and semantic) and timing (immediate and delayed) influence word recognition and comprehension for low ability second-grade readers.

A sample of 9 low ability second-grade readers were selected and randomly assigned to one of 3 treatment sequence conditions. Each group received graphophonemic immediate prompts (The teacher immediately calls the readers attention to the deviation by pointing to the word and prompting, "Look closely at the letters in the word."); graphophonemic delayed prompts (The teacher prompts as above but after the reader has completed reading the sentence or a complete thought within a complex sentence.); and semantic delayed prompts (The teacher prompts the reader by asking, "Does that make sense?" after the reader has completed reading the sentence). A single-subject format (eg. A B A C A D A) was incorporated by using a Latin Square design for presenting the three treatment conditions to all three groups. On each of the twenty-three days the students orally read a different passage. Each treatment condition was conducted for approximately five fifteen minute reading sessions over a three week period. The four baselines had

two sessions each. The dependent measures were literal comprehension and qualitative dimensions of word recognition, graphic similarity, semantic acceptability, and self-corrections.

Results indicated that the treatments did not differentially affect the graphic similarity of the readers' responses, although the semantic delayed condition did encourage responses which were higher in semantic acceptability. In addition, results indicated no significant differences in the percent of miscues corrected by each of the three groups. However, all three groups increased in the use of the correction process from BL_1 to BL_4. No systematic sequence of treatment effects were evident for either word recognition or comprehension. Finally, the semantic delayed condition influenced comprehension more positively than did the graphophonemic immediate and graphophonemic delayed conditions.